

BIOGRAPHY

Congresswoman Val Demings represents Florida's 10th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Born in a two-room, wooden framed home in Jacksonville, Val Demings was the youngest of seven children. Her parents, Elouise, a maid, and James, a janitor, did all they could to support their seven children and instill in them the meaning of hard work.

Val took these lessons seriously, getting her first job at age 14, and became the first in her family to graduate from college. With her parents proudly at her side, she received a B.S. in Criminology from Florida State University.

Val began her career in Jacksonville as a social worker, working with foster children. Despite seeing few women in the ranks of law enforcement in the early 1980's, Val was inspired to move to Orlando to join the police force. She graduated from the police academy as class president, receiving the Board of Trustees' Award for Overall Excellence, and quickly earned the reputation of a tenacious, no-nonsense cop.

It was that reputation that helped her work her way up the ranks while raising a family. During her 27-year career she served in virtually every department, including serving as Commander of the Special Operations, where she was responsible for some of Orlando's highest profile tasks, including special events and dignitary protection.

In 2007, Val Demings made history when she was appointed to serve as Orlando's first female Chief of Police.

Chief Demings was widely praised for her dynamic leadership and a significant drop in crime. She shepherded the department through the financial crisis and despite budgetary constraints kept the same number of officers on the streets. Remarkably, the Orlando Police Department reduced violent crime by more than 40 percent while she was Chief.

Chief Demings founded innovative programs like Operation Positive Direction, a mentoring program that empowers at-risk students through tutoring, community service, and positive incentives. She also launched Operation Free Palms, a project focusing on rejuvenating Orlando's most crime-ridden housing complex, the Palms Apartments. Collaborating with city officials and faith leaders, this initiative included increasing access to childcare, building playgrounds, a GED program, and job skills training to improve the quality of life in Orlando's most distressed community.

Rep. Demings is eager to continue her record of public service as the congresswoman representing the people of the 10th District of Florida.

Rep. Demings is married to Orange County Sheriff Jerry Demings, is a proud mother to three sons, and proud grandmother to five.

Rep. Demings holds an honorary doctorate of laws from Bethune-Cookman University.

Rep. Demings is an active member of St. Mark A.M.E., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Orlando Chapter of the Links, Inc., NAACP Silver Life Member, Florida Bar Citizens Advisory Committee, Florida Police Chiefs, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives, National Congress of Black Women, and numerous other affiliations.

Rep. Demings enjoys spending her very limited free time riding her Harley-Davidson Road King Classic motorcycle. She has completed the O.U.C. half marathon as well as the Walt Disney marathon.

Rep. Demings sits on the Judiciary Committee and the Committee on Homeland Security.

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BIOGRAPHY - SHORT

Congresswoman Val Demings represents Florida's 10th District. The first in her family to graduate college, she became a social worker, then a police officer. In 2007, she made history by becoming Orlando's first female Chief of Police. Chief Demings shepherded the department through the financial crisis, championed policing strategies that put the community first, and oversaw a 40% reduction in violent crime. She serves as a member of the House Homeland Security and Judiciary Committees and rides her Harley-Davidson in her limited spare time.

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